

GUILDFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL

DRAFT COUNCILLORS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME (based on the recommendations of the IRP)

This Scheme of Councillors' Allowances (to be approved by the full Council on 5 December 2023) is made in accordance with the provisions of the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended.

1. The Guildford Borough Council Scheme of Councillors' Allowances shall come into effect on 1 April 2024.

Interpretation

2. In this scheme:
 - "councillor" means an elected member of Guildford Borough Council who is a councillor.
 - 'member' means any person who is either a councillor or a co-opted member.
 - "co-opted member" means any person who is not a councillor but who has been appointed by the Council to sit on a committee or sub-committee of the Council whether as a voting or non-voting member.
 - "year" means the 12 months ending on 31 March in any year.

Basic Allowance

3. Subject to paragraph 8 below, a basic allowance comprising £8,579 per annum shall be paid to each councillor.

Special Responsibility Allowance

4. Subject to paragraphs 5 to 8 below, a special responsibility allowance shall be paid to those councillors who hold a position of special responsibility as specified in Schedule 1, and such allowance shall be in addition to the basic allowance payable under paragraph 3 above.
5. The amount of each such allowance shall be the amount specified against the respective special responsibility in Schedule 1.
6. A councillor shall not be entitled to receive at any time more than one special responsibility allowance. If a councillor qualifies for more than one special responsibility allowance, they shall receive the higher-valued special responsibility allowance.
7. The maximum number of recipients of SRAs at any one time shall not exceed 50% of Council Members (24 Members).

Part-Year Entitlement

8. If, in the course of the year, this scheme is amended or a councillor's entitlement changes, the relevant basic and/or special responsibility allowance shall be calculated and paid pro-rata during the particular month in which the amendment to the scheme or change to entitlement occurs.

Dependants' Carers' Allowance

9. Dependants' Carers' Allowance shall be paid to those councillors who necessarily incur expense in arranging for the care of their children or other dependants to enable them to undertake any of the duties specified in Schedule 2 to this Scheme.

10. The following conditions shall apply:

Level 1 (a) – A £500 annual allowance for Councillors where there is one or more children aged 12 or younger that normally reside in their household and for whom they are caring. This allowance would only be payable until the child's 13th birthday. This allowance would be taxable.

Level 1 (b) – A £500 annual allowance for Councillors where there is one or more persons that normally reside in their household and for whom they are a registered carer. This allowance would be taxable.

Level 2 – This shall be for specialist care based at cost upon production of receipts and requiring medical evidence that this type of care is required. This allowance would not be taxable and shall apply for councillors with caring responsibility for persons of any age. There shall be no limit to these claims, provided that they are made in respect of approved duties.

11. Councillors shall only be entitled to claim one dependants' carers' allowance (at either Level 1 (a) or (b), or Level 2) regardless of circumstances. Councillors wishing to claim for this allowance will be required to submit proof on an annual basis such as a child's birth certificate and/or official confirmation that they live at their address, being formally registered as a carer with a GP, or professional medical evidence before the Allowance will be payable.

Co-optees' Allowance

12. The Council shall pay a co-optees' allowance of £429 per annum to each co-opted member.

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13. The basic allowance, special responsibility allowances, dependants' carers' allowance, and co-optees' allowance shall be adjusted annually in line with the percentage increase in staff salaries at Guildford Borough Council. The adjustment shall take effect from the beginning of the 2025-26 financial year up to and including the 2027-28 financial year. Where staff salaries are increased by way of a lump sum payment, the Allowances referred to above shall be adjusted by applying an average percentage increase.

Travel and Subsistence Allowance

- 14.** An allowance shall be paid to any councillor for travelling and subsistence in connection with any of the duties specified in Schedule 2.
- 15.** An allowance shall be paid to a co-opted member of a committee or sub-committee of the Council for travelling and subsistence in connection with any of the duties specified in Schedule 2, provided that their expenses to cover travel and subsistence costs are not also being met by a third party.
- 16.** Councillors or co-opted members:
 - (a) will be reimbursed the cost of second class or any available cheap rate travel using public transport on production of a valid ticket in respect of any of the duties specified in Schedule 2;
 - (b) are entitled to travel by taxi or private hire vehicle where no public transport is reasonably available or for reasons of health/disability/safety. Reimbursement will be on the basis of the fare. In order to allow reimbursement of such claims, a valid receipt or proof of purchase of ticket for each journey must be submitted; and
 - (c) shall be permitted to claim for reimbursement of any reasonable parking charges incurred whilst on any of the duties specified in Schedule 2.
- 17.** A flat rate motor mileage allowance of 45p per mile in respect of cars and 24p per mile in respect of motorcycles shall be payable. A flat rate cycle mileage allowance of 20p per mile shall also be payable.
- 18.** Subsistence Allowance:
Reasonable subsistence allowances will be paid for the approved duties specified in Schedule 2, provided that:
 - (a) subsistence allowances are only payable for attending approved duties outside of the Borough;
 - (b) refreshments are not provided as part of the meeting/function attended.
 - (c) meal allowances will be paid only where a member is undertaking an approved duty which involves their absence from home for a period exceeding four hours; and
 - (d) all claims are accompanied by valid receipts.

Overnight Accommodation:

There is no set allowance for overnight accommodation. However, councillors should endeavour to stay in accommodation which provides good value for money but, if the reason for requiring overnight accommodation is to attend a training event, conference, or similar event, councillors may stay overnight at the venue being used for that event. Receipts must be provided with all claims for reimbursement of accommodation costs.

Reimbursement of reasonable overnight accommodation costs will also only be payable for attending approved duties outside of the Borough.

By way of guidance, it is considered that overnight accommodation costs ranging from £100 to £150 are deemed to be “reasonable”, dependent on the location. All overnight accommodation should be pre-booked by officers wherever possible. No claims for alcoholic drinks will be reimbursed.

Recovery of Allowances Paid

19. Where payment of any allowance has already been made in respect of any period during which the member concerned:
- (a) ceases to be a member of the Council, or
 - (b) is in any other way not entitled to receive the allowance in respect of that period,
- the Council shall require that such part of the allowance as relates to any such period be repaid to the Council.

Claims and Payments

20. Payments shall be made for basic, special responsibility and co-optees’ allowances in instalments of one-twelfth of the amounts respectively specified in this scheme, on the 15th day of each month.
21. A claim for travelling and subsistence or dependants’ carers’ allowance;
- shall be made on such form as may be provided for that purpose within six months from the date of the performance of the duty for which the claim is made;
 - shall be accompanied, where appropriate, by receipts and/or any relevant evidence of the costs incurred.
 - shall be subject to such validation and accounting procedures as the Chief Executive may from time to time prescribe.
22. Travelling and subsistence and dependants’ carers’ allowance shall be paid on the 15th day of each month for any claim received not less than 14 days before that date.
23. Where a councillor is also a member of another authority, that councillor may not receive allowances from more than one authority in respect of the same duties.

Records of Allowances and Publications

24. The Council shall keep a record of payments made by it under this scheme, including the name of the recipients of the payment and the amount and nature of each payment.
25. The record of the payments made by the Council under this scheme shall be available at all reasonable times for inspection by any local government elector at no charge. A copy shall also be supplied to any person who requests it on payment of a reasonable fee.
26. As soon as reasonably practicable after the end of each financial year, the Council shall make arrangements to publish the total sums paid by it to each recipient for each different allowance.

Renunciation

27. A councillor may at any time and for any period, by notice in writing given to the Democratic Services and Elections Manager, elect to forgo any part of their entitlement to an allowance under this scheme.

Parental Leave Arrangements for Councillors

28. All councillors shall continue to receive their Basic Allowance in full for a period up to six months in the case of absence from their councillor duties due to leave related to maternity, paternity, adoption shared parental leave or sickness absence.
29. Councillors entitled to a Special Responsibility Allowance shall continue to receive their allowance in full for a period of six months, in the case of absence from their councillor duties due to leave related to maternity, paternity, adoption, shared parental leave or sickness absence.
30. Where for reasons connected with sickness, maternity leave, adoption leave, paternity leave or shared parental leave, a councillor is unable to attend a meeting of the Council for a period of six months, a dispensation by Council can be sought before the expiry of that six-month period in accordance with Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972.
31. If a replacement to cover the period of absence under these provisions is appointed by Council or the Leader (or in the case of a party group position the party group) the replacement shall be entitled to claim a Special Responsibility Allowance pro rata for the period over which the cover is provided.

Revocation

32. The Scheme of Allowances adopted by the Council on 5 December 2023 is hereby revoked with effect from 1 April 2024.

Special Responsibility Allowances

The following are specified as the special responsibilities for which special responsibility allowances are payable and the amounts of those allowances:

Tier	Special Responsibility	Basis of calculation	Amount £
One	Leader of the Council	250% of the Basic Allowance	21,448
Two	Deputy Leader of the Council	100% of the Basic Allowance	8,579
Three	Executive Members (excluding Leader and Deputy Leader) Chairman of Planning Committee Mayor	75% of the Basic Allowance	6,434
Four	Chairman of Corporate Governance and Standards Committee Chairman of Overview & Scrutiny Committee Political Group Leaders (of groups comprising more than 10% of members overall)	50% of the Basic Allowance	4,290
Five	Chairman of Licensing Committee Chairmen of Executive Advisory Boards Deputy Mayor Vice-Chairman of Planning Committee Political Group Leaders (of groups comprising less than 10% of members overall)	25% of the Basic Allowance	2,145
	Designated Licensing Sub-Committee chairmen	See para 4.48 of the IRP report	71 per meeting chaired

Schedule 2

Approved Duties - Dependants' Carers' and Travelling and Subsistence Allowances

The approved duties for which these allowances are payable include:

- (i) attending a meeting:
 - of the Council, the Executive, a committee of the Executive, an Executive Advisory Board, or a committee or sub-committee of the Council including any agenda briefing in connection with any such meeting
 - of some other body (including a committee, sub-committee or working group of such body) to which the Council makes appointments or nominations including any agenda briefing in connection with any such meeting
 - which has **both** been authorised by the Council, a committee, or sub-committee of the Council or a joint committee of the Council and one or more other authorities, or a sub-committee of a joint committee **and** to which representatives of more than one political group have been invited
 - of a local authority association of which the Council is a member
- (ii) formal site visits and other meetings authorised in advance by a committee or sub-committee
- (iii) Attendance at:
 - meetings convened by, or on behalf of, the Joint Chief Executive, a Strategic Director, or an Executive Head of Service
 - training courses, seminars or presentations held for councillors by the Council or approved third parties
 - Overview and Scrutiny work programme meetings
 - Executive Advisory Board work programme meetings
 - a meeting of any task group, working group, board, or panel of councillors established by the Council, the Executive, a lead councillor, a committee, or an Executive Advisory Board
 - any task and finish group established by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee
 - meetings of a local parish council, parish meeting, residents' association, local amenity group or neighbourhood meetings with police in a local ward councillor capacity
 - councillor ward and constituency activities including attendance at ward surgeries.

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